

What is Claimed:

1 1. A network system, comprising:

2 a content providing terminal for use by a digital content  
3 provider;

4 an advertisement providing terminal for use by a provider of  
5 advertising content to be attached to digital content provided  
6 by said content providing terminal; and

7 a server connected to said content providing terminal and said  
8 advertisement providing terminal through the Internet for  
9 receiving said digital content from said content providing  
10 terminal, collecting said advertising content to be attached to  
11 the received digital content from said advertisement providing  
12 terminal, providing information to the provider of said digital  
13 content and the provider of said advertising content for making  
14 a contract between the provider of said digital content and the  
15 provider of said advertising content, said information  
16 including a condition with regard to payment to the provider of  
17 said digital content, and publishing on the Internet the  
18 digital content with advertisement produced by combining said  
19 digital content with said advertising content between which  
20 said contract has been made.

1 2. The network system according to Claim 1, wherein said  
2 content providing terminal, said advertisement providing  
3 terminal, and said server communicate with each other by using  
4 a secure communication protocol.

1 3. A network system, comprising:

2 a content providing terminal for use by a digital content  
3 provider;

4 an advertisement providing terminal for use by a provider  
5 of advertising content to be attached to the digital content  
6 provided by said content providing terminal;

7 a first server connected with said content providing  
8 terminal and said advertisement providing terminal through a  
9 communication network for receiving said digital content from  
10 said content providing terminal, and collecting said  
11 advertising content to be attached to the received digital  
12 content from said advertisement providing terminal; and

13 a second server for storing and publishing on the Internet  
14 the digital content with advertisement produced by combining  
15 said digital content received by said first server with said  
16 advertising content collected for attachment to said digital  
17 content;

18 wherein the provider of said digital content and the  
19 provider of said advertising content establish a time condition  
20 in the collection of said advertising content at said first  
21 server, said time condition limiting a time period during which  
22 said digital content with said advertising content attached  
23 thereto may be published, and said second server publishes said  
24 digital content with advertisement in accordance with said time  
25 condition.

4 4. The network system according to Claim 3, wherein the  
2 provider of said digital content and the provider of said  
3 advertising content further establish, in the collection of  
4 said advertising content at said first server, a condition with  
5 regard to payment to the provider of said digital content from  
6 the provider of said advertising content.

4 5. The network system according to Claim 3, wherein said  
2 first server and said second server are configured by the same  
3 hardware.

1 6. An auction server for supporting a network auction to  
2 receive bids for pricing an object to be auctioned through a  
3 communication network, said auction server comprising:

4 registration means for receiving digital content and  
5 registering said digital content as an object to be auctioned;

6 bid receiving means for collecting advertisement to be  
7 attached to said digital content registered as the object to be  
8 auctioned and receiving bids for pricing to attach said  
9 advertisement to said digital content;

10 notification means for notifying a provider of said  
11 digital content and a provider of said advertisement who makes  
12 a successful bid for said digital content, of the result of the  
13 auction after the auction ends; and

14 digital content with advertisement publishing means for  
15 publishing said digital content to which advertising content is  
16 attached, said advertising content being provided by the  
17 provider of said advertisement who has made a successful bid  
18 for said digital content at said auction.

1 7. The auction server according to Claim 6, wherein said  
2 registration means accepts specified conditions for  
3 advertisement attachment when said digital content is  
4 registered as the object to be auctioned, said conditions  
5 including at least a time condition for limiting a time period  
6 during which said digital content with said advertisement  
7 attached thereto is published, and said publishing means

publishes said digital content to which said advertisement is attached in accordance with said time condition specified when said digital content is registered as the object to be auctioned.

8. A system for distributing digital content, comprising:

means for collecting advertising content to be attached to music content including recorded digital data of music;

means for combining said music content with said collected advertising content to produce music content with advertisement so that the advertisement is reproduced before, after, or during the performance of the music; and

means for publishing on the Internet said music content with advertisement produced by said content combining means.

9. The digital content distributing system according to Claim 8, wherein said collecting means comprises means for specifying at least an insertion position of said advertisement to be attached to said music and a length of said advertisement as conditions for attaching said advertising content to said music content.

1 10. A system for distributing digital content,  
2 comprising:

3 means for collecting advertising content to be attached to  
4 video content including recorded digital video data;

5 means for combining said video content with said collected  
6 advertising content to produce video content with advertisement  
7 so that the advertisement is reproduced before, after, or  
8 during the playback of the video; and

9 means for publishing on the Internet said video content  
10 with advertisement produced by said content combining means.

11 11. The digital content distributing system according to  
12 Claim 10, wherein said collecting means includes means for  
13 specifying at least an insertion position of said advertisement  
14 to be attached to said video and a length of said advertisement  
15 as conditions for attaching said advertising content to said  
16 video content.

1 12. A method for distributing digital content through a  
2 communication network, comprising the steps of:

3           collecting advertising content to be attached to digital  
4 content to be distributed under a condition of payment to a  
5 provider of said digital content;

6           combining said digital content with said collected  
7 advertising content; and

8           publishing on said communication network said digital  
9 content to which said advertising content is attached.

10           13. The digital content distributing method according to  
11 Claim 12, wherein said collecting step comprises the steps of:

12           specifying advertisement attaching conditions for said  
13 digital content to be distributed, said conditions including at  
14 least a time condition for limiting a time period during which  
15 said digital content with the advertisement is published and a  
16 positional condition for specifying a position in said digital  
17 content where said advertisement is inserted; and

18           showing said digital content and said advertisement  
19 attaching conditions for said digital content to advertising  
20 content providers;

wherein said publishing step publishes said digital content in accordance with said time condition included in said advertisement attaching conditions.

14. The digital content distributing method according to Claim 12, wherein said publishing step comprises the steps of:

accepting through said communication network a request for sending said digital content; and

sending said digital content to an information processing terminal issuing said request without charging.

15. A method for distributing digital content through a communication network, comprising the steps of:

receiving and registering digital content to be distributed;

performing an auction for advertisement providers on the communication network for attaching advertising content to said registered digital content;



8 combining advertising content provided by an advertisement  
9 provider who has made a successful bid for said registered  
10 digital content with said digital content; and

11 publishing on the communication network said digital  
12 content to which said advertising content is attached.

1 16. The digital content distributing method according to  
2 Claim 15, wherein said registering step comprises the steps of:

3 specifying advertisement attaching conditions including at  
4 least a time condition for limiting a time period during which  
5 said digital content with the advertisement is published; and

6 showing said registered digital content and said  
7 advertisement attaching conditions specified for said digital  
8 content to said advertisement providers;

9 wherein said publishing step publishes said digital  
10 content in accordance with said time condition included in said  
11 advertisement attaching conditions.

1 17. The digital content distributing method according to  
2 Claim 15, wherein said publishing step comprises the steps of:

3           receiving through said communication network a request for  
4           sending said digital content; and

5           sending said digital content to an information processing  
6           terminal issuing said request, without limiting duplication of  
7           said digital content.